

THE LEGEND OF THE ORIGIN OF THE MANCHU DYNASTY.¹

BY THE REV. R. MORRISON.

THE Tai Tsing family (the present ruling dynasty of China) claim a supernatural sanction for their occupation of the imperial throne. It is stated in their ancient traditions that the first intimation of the subsequent glory of the family was given at "the Long White Mountain, which was upwards of 250 li, or 60 miles, high. On the top of it, was a lake, 80 li in circumference, from which sprung three rivers. It was there declared by a supernatural voice, 'This land will produce a Holy Man who shall unite in one all nations.'

"At the foot of the mountain was a pool of water, at which, tradition says, three Celestial females came to bathe. After bathing, a divine magpie holding in its bill a certain fruit, flew and placed it in the garments of one of the females named Ki. She swallowed it, and immediately brought forth a son, who could speak as soon as he was born, and whose person and figure were extraordinary. To him it was said, 'Heaven has born you to tranquillise disordered nations.' The name given him was Ai-hsin-chio-lo. After his birth, his mother disappeared, and the boy having placed himself in a bark, floated down the stream of a river to a certain shore, where having ascended the beach, he broke off willows and framed a seat on which he sat down, in the wilderness. There were in that land contending Chieftains, who fought and killed many. One who went forth to draw water, saw the boy, and was astonished at his extraordinary appearance. Having returned, and told the people of the Clan, they came out and questioned him respecting his name and surname. He said, 'I was born of the Celestial Female Fu-ku-lun, and am ordained by Heaven to

¹ We reproduce this timely article from the Rev. R. Morrison's *View of China*, pp. 10-11.—ED.

settle your disordered state.' All astonished said, 'Heaven has brought forth a Holy One,' and forthwith constituted him their Sovereign. They fixed their abode at the city Go-to-le, in the wilderness of Go-han-hwui, on the east of the Long White Mountain. They denominated their country Man-chow.

"It happened after this, that the people of the state rebelled and killed all the family except one boy, whose name was Fan-cha-kin, who ran into the wilderness, and escaped from a rook or magpie alighting on his head, and being seen by his pursuers at a distance, was mistaken for a rotten trunk of an old tree. From this, the family was preserved from becoming extinct.¹ The next person of eminence, who is now termed the Sixth Ancestor,² having revenged the murder of his family, and fixed himself in their former place of abode, he inherited the name of Ai-hsin-chio-lo; and his descendants still retain the two last syllables of the name, and wear a red girdle to distinguish them."

Tai-sung, the Manchu prince, when about to enter upon the subjugation of China, wrote down "seven grievances" which he laid before heaven in a solemn manner. His words are:³

"Ere my Grandfather had injured a blade of grass, or usurped an inch of ground that belonged to Ming, Ming causelessly commenced hostilities, and injured him.—This is the first thing to be revenged.

"Although Ming commenced hostilities, we, still desirous of peace, agreed to engrave it on a stone, and take a solemn oath in confirmation of it, that neither Manchow nor Chinese should pass the respective limits; whoever dared to do so, should, the moment he was seen, be destroyed; and that the party which connived at any violation of this treaty, should be exposed to the judgments of Heaven. Notwithstanding this oath, Ming again passed the frontier with troops in order to assist a People called the Ye-hih.—This is the second thing to be revenged.

"When a subject of Ming passed over the frontier and committed depredations in my territory, I, agreeably to the oath above stated, destroyed him. But Ming turned his back on the former

¹From the preservation of Fan-cha-kin, the Tartars venerate the magpie, and prohibit its being shot. They have an annual ceremony at the spot where this deliverance took place in commemoration of it.

²The sixth Ancestor is denominated in the Miao-'hao, Chao-tsou; the fifth, Hing-tsou; the fourth, King-tsou; the third, Hsien-tsou; the second, Tai-tsou; and the first, or Shun-che, She-tsou. Tai-tsou waged his first war about A. D. 1600, with one hundred soldiers and thirty suits of armour.

³Translated by Rev. R. Morrison, *ibid.*, p. 9.

treaty confirmed with an oath, complained of what I had done ; put to death an envoy of mine ; and having seized ten men on the borders, caused them to be slain.—This is the third thing to be revenged.

“Ming with troops, passed the frontier to assist the Ye hih, and caused my daughter, already betrothed, to have her destination changed, and be given to another person of the Mung-ku nation.—This is the fourth thing to be revenged.

“For many generations, I held as my frontier, the Chai-ho hill, and places adjacent ; my people cultivated it ; but Ming has refused to allow them to reap, and expelled them from thence.—This is the fifth thing to be revenged.

“The Ye-hih committed crimes against Heaven ; but Ming acted with partiality and gave entire credit to their statements, whilst he sent a special envoy to me bearing a letter, in which he vilified and insulted me.—This is the sixth thing to be revenged.

“Formerly the Ha-tah, assisting the Ye-hih, twice came and invaded me. I announced it to Heaven, and reduced the Ha-tah. Ming formed a conspiracy with him and others, to attack me and restore him his kingdom ; and in consequence, the Ye-hih several times invaded the Ha-tah territory.

“In the contentions of neighboring states, those who obey the will of Heaven conquer ; those who oppose the intentions of Heaven are defeated and destroyed. How can those who have died by the sword be restored to life ! or those who have obtained the people, return them again ! Heaven establishes the Prince of a great nation ! Why does Ming feel resentment against my country alone ?

“The Gih-lun, and other nations, united their forces against me, to invade me. Heaven rejected Gih-lun for commencing bloodshed ; but my nation flourished as the Spring. Ming is now assisting the Ye-hih, who are under severe reprehension and wrath ; and is thereby opposing the will of Heaven, reversing right and wrong, and acting in the most irregular manner.—This is the seventh thing to be revenged.”